



## Snorkeling places: Aruba's underwater wonderland



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# New Trump orders on transgender troops, COVID and more expected on Hegseth's first day

By TARA COPP, LOLITA C. BALDOR and ZEKE MILLER  
Associated Press

**WASHINGTON (AP)** — President Donald Trump was expected to sign a flurry of executive orders focused on the military Monday, including to reinstate troops booted for refusing COVID-19 vaccines, assess transgender forces and further outline rollbacks in diversity programs, just as Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth began his first day on the job. The orders could further clarify initial directives Trump issued shortly after his inauguration last week, when he removed protections for transgender troops put in place by former President Joe Biden and banned DEI initiatives at federal agencies.

Trump had tried to impose a ban on transgender troops during his first term, but it was tangled up in the courts for years before being overturned by Biden shortly after he took office. The new order on transgender troops does not impose an immediate ban, but directs the Pentagon to come up with a policy on



Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth, right, pats Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Gen. Charles Q. Brown Jr., on his shoulder as he answers questions from reporters after arriving at the Pentagon, Monday, Jan. 27, 2025 in Washington.

their service in the armed forces based on military readiness, a person familiar with the matter told The Associated Press. Hegseth told reporters as he arrived at the Pentagon that his first official day would be busy, with additional executive orders expected "on removing DEI inside the Pentagon, reinstating troops

who were pushed out because of COVID mandates, Iron Dome for America this is happening quickly." Trump promised during the campaign to build an Iron Dome, the advanced air defense system used by Israel. It was not immediately clear what the additional order on DEI diversity, equity and inclusion would

be, but Trump's initial action ending those programs across the U.S. government already has had far-reaching consequences. Without clearer direction, agencies have been taking a broad approach at removing any content that seemed to run afoul of Trump's ban. That temporarily included videos of the storied Tuske-

gee Airmen and World War II Women's Airforce Service Pilots, or WASPs, which were part of DEI training courses for the Air Force's basic military training. Videos on both the Tuskegee Airmen and WASPs were removed as the courses were taken down last week, causing an uproar.

WASPs were vital in ferrying warplanes for the military. The Tuskegee Airmen were the nation's first Black military pilots, who served in a segregated WWII unit, and their all-Black 332nd Fighter Group had one of the lowest loss records of all the bomber escorts in the war. On Sunday, the Air Force clarified that the DEI courses had been removed to be edited but that the Tuskegee Airmen and WASP content would continue to be taught.

"The revised training which focuses on the documented historic legacy and decorated valor with which these units and Airmen fought for our Nation in World War II and beyond will continue on 27 January," the Air Force said in a statement. □

Associated Press

# CDC ordered to stop working with WHO immediately, upending expectations of an extended withdrawal

By MIKE STOBBE  
AP Medical Writer

**NEW YORK (AP)** — U.S. public health officials have been told to stop working with the World Health Organization, effective immediately.

A U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention official, John Nkengasong, sent a memo to senior leaders at the agency on Sunday night telling them

that all agency staff who work with the WHO must immediately stop their collaborations and "await further guidance." Experts said the sudden stoppage was a surprise and would set back work on investigating and trying to stop outbreaks of Marburg virus and mpox in Africa, as well as brewing threats from around the world. It also comes as health authorities around the world are monitoring bird flu outbreaks among U.S. livestock.

The Associated Press viewed a copy of Nkengasong's memo, which said the stop-work policy applied to "all CDC staff engaging with WHO through technical working groups, coordinating centers, ad-

visory boards, cooperative agreements or other means in person or virtual." It also says CDC staff are not allowed to visit WHO offices.

President Trump last week issued an executive order to begin the process of withdrawing the U.S. from WHO, but that did not take immediate effect. Leaving WHO requires the approval of Congress and that the U.S. meets its financial obligations for the current fiscal year. The U.S. also must provide a one-year notice. His administration also told federal health agencies to stop most communications with the public through at least the end of the month. "Stopping communications and meetings with WHO is a big problem," said Dr.

Jeffrey Klausner, a University of Southern California public health expert who collaborates with WHO on work against sexually transmitted infections.

"People thought there would be a slow withdrawal. This has really caught everyone with their pants down," said Klausner, who said he learned of it from someone at CDC.

"Talking to WHO is a two-way street," he added, noting that WHO and U.S. health officials benefit from each other's expertise. The collaboration allows the U.S. to learn about new tests and treatments as well as about emerging outbreaks information "which can help us protect Americans abroad and at home." □



President Donald Trump signs an executive order withdrawing the U.S. from the World Health Organization in the Oval Office of the White House, Monday, Jan. 20, 2025, in Washington.

Associated Press



## Hundreds of U.S. visa appointments canceled in Colombia following spat over deportation flights

By **MANUEL RUEDA**

**Associated Press**

**BOGOTÁ, Colombia (AP)**

— A dispute over deportation flights from the United States to Colombia entered its second day on Monday, with the U.S. backing down on a threat to impose steep tariffs on Colombian goods after the South American nation agreed to accept flights of deported migrants from the U.S.

But while Colombia has avoided tariffs that would have a devastating effect on its economy, visa restrictions that were issued on Sunday by the U.S. State Department are still in place.

On Monday, dozens of Colombians arrived at the U.S. Embassy in Bogota and were handed letters by local staff that said their appointments had been canceled “due to the Colombian government’s refusal to accept repatriation flights of Colombian nationals.”

In Colombia it can take up to two years to get a visa appointment at the U.S. embassy in Bogotá, which has also been handling visa requests from neighboring Venezuela for several years.



**A U.S. consular official explains to people with scheduled visa document submissions that their appointments were canceled due to Colombian President Gustavo Petro's refusal to accept repatriation flights of Colombian citizens from the U.S., at a U.S. Embassy Applicant Service Center in Bogota, Colombia, Monday, Jan. 27, 2025.**

Visa applicants who turned up at the embassy on Monday said they were frustrated with the new restrictions, which mean they will likely have to wait several more months for a new appointment.

“President Petro did not represent our interests,” said Elio Camelo, a U.S. visa seeker from the city of Cali who had traveled to Bogota

for his appointment.

“There is a lot of uncertainty now over what will happen next,” said Mauricio Manrique, who had his Monday morning appointment cancelled.

He had travelled from Popayan, 600 km (372 miles) south of Bogota, for his appointment.

Tensions between Colombia and the United States

escalated Sunday after President Gustavo Petro wrote an early morning message on X saying he would not allow two U.S. Air Force planes carrying Colombian deportees to land in the country. He had previously authorized the flights.

Petro also shared a video that showed another group of deportees report-

edly arriving in Brazil with shackles on their legs. He said Colombia would only accept deportation flights when the United States had established protocols that ensured the “dignified treatment” of expelled migrants.

U.S. President Donald Trump responded with a post of his own on Truth Social, in which he called for 25% emergency tariffs on Colombian exports to the United States, and also said that the U.S. visas of Colombian government officials would be revoked, while goods coming from the South American country would face enhanced customs inspections.

Meanwhile, the State Department said Sunday it would stop issuing visas to Colombian nationals until deportation flights resumed.

Tensions decreased Sunday night following negotiations between the countries, with the White House saying in a statement that Colombia had allowed the resumption of deportation flights and “agreed to all of President Trump’s terms,” including the arrival of deportees on military flights. □

## 2 killed in southern Lebanon as protests against Israeli presence erupt for a second day

By **SALLY ABU ALJOUD**

**Associated Press**

**BEIRUT (AP)** — Firing by Israeli troops killed two people and wounded 17 on Monday in the second day of deadly protests in southern Lebanon, health officials said, as residents displaced by the 14-month war between Israel and Hezbollah attempted to return to villages where Israeli troops remain.

The shooting came a day after 24 people were killed and more than 130 wounded when Israeli troops opened fire on protesters who breached roadblocks set up along the border.

Under a U.S.-brokered ceasefire on Nov. 27, Is-

raeli forces were to withdraw from southern Lebanon, and Hezbollah was to move north of the Litani River by Jan. 26. While the Lebanese army and U.N. peacekeepers had already deployed in several villages before the deadline, Israel remained in over a dozen villages.

The United States and Lebanon announced later on Sunday that the deadline to meet the ceasefire terms had been extended to Feb. 18.

In a pre-recorded speech aired Monday, Hezbollah leader Naim Kassem said his group won’t accept the extension of the ceasefire deadline, without address-

ing the fact that the Lebanese government had already done so.

“Israel has to withdraw because the 60 days are over,” Kassem said. “We won’t accept any excuses to extend one second or one day.”

“Any delay in the withdrawal is the responsibility of the United Nations, the US, France and Israel,” he added.

Kassem also said his group has not violated the ceasefire terms and acknowledged that they considered retaliating against Israeli airstrikes but were advised by Lebanese authorities against it.

Protests resumed Monday

particularly in eastern border villages, where residents again attempted to return home. Israeli troops opened fire, killing one per-

son in the town of Odaisseh and wounding seven others across four southern villages, the Health Ministry reported. □




**Lebanese citizens shout slogans against Israel as they try to enter with Lebanese soldiers a neighbourhood in the southern Lebanese village of Aitaroun, Lebanon, Monday, Jan. 27, 2025.**


**Associated Press**





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## Po-Ke Ono Azure launches exclusive breakfast menu



**Po-Ke Ono Azure is proud to announce the launch of its exclusive breakfast menu, inviting guests to experience mornings infused with Asian-inspired flavors, fresh ingredients, and a touch of tropical paradise.**

Located at the scenic Azure Residences at Eagle Beach, Po-Ke Ono now offers an exceptional morning menu with options like the Thai Breakfast Bowl, Acai Bowl, and



Asian Omelet. Designed to bring unique flavors to Aruba's breakfast scene, the menu also includes fresh coffee, mimosas, and tropical juices, perfect for pairing with the restaurant's relaxed beachside atmosphere.

"Our goal was to create a breakfast experience that captures the essence of Po-Ke Ono and brings a fresh twist to mornings here at Azure," said Executive Chef Urvin Croes, founder of Po-Ke Ono. "Each dish is crafted with care, featuring

ingredients that highlight the vibrant, Asian-inspired flavors we're known for."



Available every morning at Po-Ke Ono Azure, the new breakfast lineup is ideal for early risers and those looking for a unique start to their day.

### About Po-Ke Ono Azure

Since its inception, Po-Ke Ono has quickly become a culinary landmark in Aruba, known for its signature fusion of Hawaiian and Asian flavors. With two locations across the island, Po-Ke Ono continues to innovate and delight, with Po-Ke Ono Azure offering exclusive breakfast options at the iconic Eagle Beach. □

## The Bushiribana Gold Mill Ruins and its history

**(Oranjestad)—The Bushiribana Gold Mill Ruins is one of the most visited places by tourists on the island, as it lies along the northern coast line near the mini pool and on the way to the Natural Bridge. Despite its seemingly plain appearance, this ruin represents one of the most important histories of the island: The Aruban Gold Rush.**

Built in 1872 by English company Aruba Island Gold Mining Company Ltd, the gold mill at Bushiribana was constructed in the area where most gold was found by locals. The story of gold on Aruba actually dates back to 1725, when a first exploration for gold on the island was commissioned by the Dutch West India Company.

Under the leadership of Mr. Paulus Printz, a three-year search was conducted on Aruba, to no avail. Though they found some gold, it was enough to motivate a further search, and the assignment was discontinued by Printz himself.

It wasn't until 100 years later, in 1824, when a young boy found a lump of gold while out herding his father's sheep. His father took it to a local merchant who then sold the lump for \$70. Unbeknownst to the boy and his father, they quite literally struck gold, and as word got out, a gold fever spread among the locals who started searching for more gold. About 25 pounds worth was found.

At the same time, the Aruban government took immediate actions, and informed Curacao that gold was found. At first, everyone could look for gold, as long as they sold it to the government. However, after some time, the government decided to implement stricter rules and banned local search parties.

Over the years, concession-holding had seen different companies from around the world, all of which used primitive methods to dig and carve out gold from the rocks. Aruba Island Gold Mining Company Ltd. was no different, but used a unique method that involved grinding the rocks and letting the dust be blown away by the strong northeast wind, leaving



clumps of gold behind. The next step was melting the gold and letting it attach to quicksilver in order to obtain pure gold. All these processes were done at the Bushiribana Gold Mill.

The gold mill itself had a short lifespan: only 10 years in service, but its structure remained relatively solid till this day, and is now a historical remnant. □

**Sources: Etnia Nativa & [goldminer-anch.com](http://goldminer-anch.com).**



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## Aruba's underwater wonderland

**ORANJESTAD** - Exploring the underwater wonders is something you should definitely do during your stay in Aruba. The underwater world has everything to offer that makes a snorkel trip so exceptional; an impressive, colorful sea life with exotic fishes, turtles and beautiful coral reef. The historic shipwrecks, located on the Aruban seabed are also worth a visit. Aruba is known for its white beaches and blue oceans, which means there are many fascinating under water spots, where you can take your snorkeling gear and we selected the top spots for you.

### Tres Trapi

Tres Trapi means tree steps in Papiamentu, Papiamentu is together with Dutch the official language spoken on Aruba. The beach is called Tres Trapi because it is accessible by the tree steps carved into the rocks. Tres Trapi is a small rocky beach, located on the north-western side of the island, approximately 5 to 10 minute drive from Palm Beach. From the unique steps you can easily walk over the beach into the clear and turquoise blue ocean. While snorkeling you will encounter all kind of tropical fishes and sea stars. The kind of starfish you will find in the Aruban waters is the red cushion sea star. This is a starfish that is commonly found in the shallow waters of the Caribbean sea and if you are lucky during your snorkeling visit to Tres Trapi, you may come across one of the green sea turtles. Respect the animal, keep your distance and enjoy the view.

Also remember; it is a once in a life time experience.

### Antilla shipwreck

Antilla is a 400-foot-long long ship, built in 1939 in Hamburg, Germany. Antilla came to Aruba, because it had to find a neutral port. When Germany invaded the Netherlands on May 10, 1940, the crew decided to let their own ship sink, to prevent it from falling into the hands of the Dutch Navy. Antilla lies on its portside in Malmok bay, and the sunken word war two ship is now one of Aruba's most popular snorkeling and dive spots. However, the ship wreck can only be reached by boat. The ship is visible from the surface and during your snorkeling trip you be surrounded by hundreds of tropical fishes, but the ship wreck alone is already impressive enough.

### Baby Beach

Baby beach; a white beach, with a crystal blue ocean. The beach is located on the southern part of the island. On the way to the famous beach, you will drive through the old capital of Aruba, San Nicolas. The old Aruban culture can be still felt and experienced here, so do not hesitate to get out of your car and walk around for a while. Baby beach is a child friendly beach, since it is shallow and the water has a pleasant temperature. The name therefore fits well with the beach. Baby beach is an excellent beach for snorkeling, especially if you want to go with small children, because the water remains shallow and there are still

many underwater wonders to see. In the ocean there is an area marked until where it is recommended to snorkel and on the beach you will find different facilities. It is a perfect beach to spend your day snorkeling and relaxing.

### Mangel Halto

Mangel Halto beach is located in Savaneta, on the southern-west part of the island. The beach is different from the other beaches in Aruba; it is beach full of mangroves. You reach the beach by a bridge through the mangroves and then you



will have several entrances to the sea. There are diverse spots where you can enjoy a perfect beach day, wooden stairs made to enter the water and a dock to sit on and enjoy the view. Mangel Halto is also worth a visit for the snorkeling experience.

Inside the bay, the water is clear and you find many colorful fish. Outside the bay is a bit more challenging for beginners because of the wind and the waves, but the coral is alive and it is just like snorkel heaven. □

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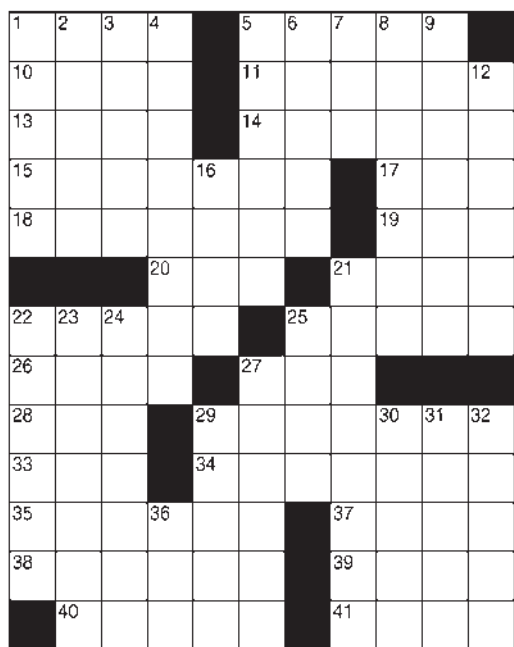
CROSSWORD

By THOMAS JOSEPH

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is LONGFELLOW

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1-29

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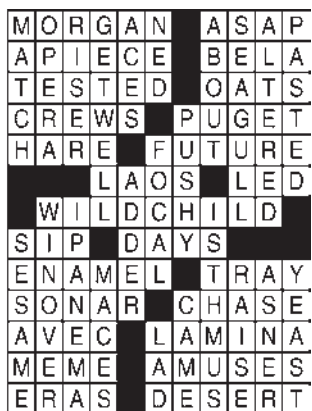
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**Cryptoquote:** JANUARY IS MY FAVORITE MONTH WHEN THE LIGHT IS PLAINEST, LEAST COLORED. AND I LIKE THE FEELING OF BEGINNINGS. — ANNE TRUITT



# Fans see Spurs' Victor Wembanyama exceed expectations. What they don't see is his work off the court



San Antonio Spurs center Victor Wembanyama (1) talks with guard Chris Paul (3) during the second half of a Paris Games 2025 NBA basketball game against the Indiana Pacers in Paris, Saturday, Jan. 25, 2025.

Associated Press

By TIM REYNOLDS  
AP Basketball Writer

**PARIS (AP)** — For all the glowing things said in Paris the past few days about San Antonio phenom Victor Wembanyama, Hall of Famer Tony Parker probably summed matters up more succinctly than anyone. Asked what the 7-foot-4 Wembanyama can become, Parker didn't hesitate. "He can be whatever he wants," said Parker, part of four of San Antonio's five championship teams. "He can be the best. He can be the best player in the NBA." Many can see why Parker believes that. It goes beyond the numbers. Parker gets to see what fans can't see, that being how much work Wembanyama puts in behind the scenes.

These are Wembanyama's stats so far this season: 24.5 points, 10.8 rebounds, 3.9 blocks and 3.7 assists per game. The last player to finish a season with those numbers was Kareem Abdul-Jabbar, a half-century ago. Now throw in 3-point shooting, which didn't exist 50 years ago, and Wembanyama who just turned 21 is putting up stats this season like nobody else in the history of basketball. Unprecedented numbers. "I'm not there yet," Wembanyama said. "I'm still working on it." When he entered the league, the big question was about whether his slim frame would be overpowered by

heavier NBA defenders. He knows still has to get stronger but based on what he was listed at originally and where he is now 209 to 235 that's a 26-pound bulk-up already. And no, he's not getting overpowered. Quite the contrary.

## Wembanyama likely to be named an All-Star

The sky evidently is not even the limit for Wembanyama, who came into the league as the most highly touted prospect since LeBron James and has exceeded probably even the loftiest expectations. He'll almost certainly be picked as an All-Star for the first time later this week. He's the Defensive Player of the Year frontrunner. He'll get MVP votes. All this, in just his second season.

And he is still learning.

"We see something, every day, new on the court that he's building," Spurs CEO R.C. Buford said. "I've watched him since he was 15 years old and what's been fascinating is how important that it is to him to continue to grow as a player. And now we're getting to see it every day." Wembanyama can make a steal at one end of the floor, then crossover dribble past a defender and let 3-pointers fly from the logo. His passes are pinpoint. He's the best shot-blocker in the league. He'll reverse-pivot, Eurostep, spin toward the baseline, spin away from the baseline, right-hand, left-hand, whatever it takes to get a shot off.

The Spurs signed Chris Paul in his 20th NBA season to be someone that Wembanyama could learn from. And that is indeed happening; Paul and Wembanyama say they talk constantly about matters both on- and off-the-court, the wise sage on one end, the young star on the other.

Thing is, Paul is learning from Wembanyama as well. Conventional basketball wisdom says the 6-foot point guard would be quarterbacking the pick-and-roll with the towering center. Not anymore. Paul has found himself at times to be the one setting the pick and doing the rolling, something he can't really remember doing before now. Such is the advantage of having a 7-foot-4 teammate with guard skills. "Vic is so unique," Paul said. "I think everybody just expects him to dunk because he's tall and that is not him by any means. He can dribble, he can pass, he can shoot. He does a little bit of everything. And that's why it's been so fun to play with Vic." Another example: Paul is one of the best thieves in NBA history, someone about to pass Jason Kidd for No. 2 on the league's all-time steals list. It's what Paul does. He goes for steals. Wembanyama has tried to get him to think differently.

"I just don't know how to not go for steals," Paul said. "To play with Vic now, guys will dribble into the lane and I'll reach and get a foul and Vic will just tap me on the shoulder and remind me that he's back there. His awareness on both ends of the court offensively and defensively is something that you just don't see all the time."

## Playoffs within reach for Wembanyama, Spurs

After splitting their two games in Paris against Indiana, San Antonio is 20-23 on the season. The Spurs are on the outside looking into the Western Conference playoff picture, but the play-in tournament and maybe even a top-six seed are far from out of reach. They're in the mix. □



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## Chiefs have 2 more calls go their way in another playoff win

By **ROB MAADDI**  
AP Pro Football Writer

Another Kansas City Chiefs playoff win. Another game where officiating steals some of the spotlight.

Patrick Mahomes rallied Kansas City to a 32-29 victory over Josh Allen and the Bills in the AFC championship game Sunday, sending the Chiefs back to the Super Bowl for the fifth time in six years with a chance to become the first team to threepeat.

But much of the talk centered on two more calls that went Kansas City's way.

In the first half, Xavier Worthy was credited with a catch when he wrestled the ball away from Bills safety Cole Bishop for a 26-yard gain to Buffalo's 3. The ball appeared to hit the ground and the CBS broadcast crew expressed confusion about the ruling. "I can see it cause you can't completely say no, but that ball hits (the ground)," analyst Tony Romo said.



**Kansas City Chiefs tight end Travis Kelce celebrates after the Chiefs defeated the Buffalo Bills in the AFC Championship NFL football game, Sunday, Jan. 26, 2025, in Kansas City, Mo.**

Associated Press

CBS rules analyst Gene Steratore also didn't think it was a catch.

The Bills challenged but the play was upheld and Mahomes then ran in for a score and a 21-10 lead.

Buffalo rallied to take a 22-21 lead and faced a fourth-and-1 at Kansas City's 41 early in the fourth quarter.

Allen was stopped on a sneak even though it appeared one official marked the ball past the line of gain before another placed it short. Replay review upheld the call because there wasn't clear evidence to overturn it. The league had a full crew of replay experts in New York to make the de-

cision. "I felt like he gained it by about a third of the football," Steratore said on the broadcast. "That was just my take on the play. Tough, tough play." Romo agreed with him. But the Chiefs took over and drove for a go-ahead touchdown. The NFL has experimented

with new technology to measure line to gain that could eventually replace the chain gang, who use two bright orange sticks and a chain to measure for first downs.

Determining ball placement through technology is another story. It requires digital components inside a football and it's unknown how accurate it would be when bodies are piled up. Last week, Kansas City benefited from two roughing-the-passer penalties during a 23-14 victory over Houston. Hall of Fame quarterback Troy Aikman, who was calling the game with Joe Buck on ESPN, was appalled after one of them.

"Oh, come on! I mean, he's a runner. I could not disagree with that one more. He barely gets hit."

Aikman said on the broadcast. "They've gotta address it in the offseason."

ESPN rules analyst Russell Yurk agreed, pointing out that two Texans collided with each other. □

## Australian Open champion Madison Keys back into women's top 10 with 3 other Americans

**MELBOURNE, Australia (AP)**

— Australian Open women's champion Madison Keys returned to her career-best ranking on Monday and joins three other American women in the WTA top 10, while men's champion Jannik Sinner maintained his significant lead atop the ATP list.

Keys won her first Grand Slam title with a three-set victory over the top-ranked Aryna Sabalenka on Saturday to move from No. 14 and match her career-high at No. 7.

Keys joins fellow Americans Coco Gauff (No. 3), Jessica Pegula (No. 6) and Emma Navarro, who slipped one



**Madison Keys of the U.S. reacts as she receives the the Daphne Akhurst Memorial Cup from Evonne Goolagong Cawley after defeating Aryna Sabalenka of Belarus in the women's singles final at the Australian Open tennis championship in Melbourne, Australia, Saturday, Jan. 25, 2025.**

Associated Press

place to No. 9, in the women's top 10.

Sabalenka, who was attempting to achieve a rare three-peat of the Australian Open title remains at No. 1, and Iga Swiatek stays at No. 2 after her loss to Keys in a thrilling semifinal.

Olympic gold medalist Zheng Qinwen dropped three places to No. 8, while former No. 2 Paola Badosa rose two places to round out the top 10 after her semifinal run at Melbourne Park.

The men's top four rankings remained as they were with Sinner at No. 1 a spot he's held since June leading Alexander Zverev, who

he beat in straight sets for a second consecutive Australian Open championship on Sunday.

Carlos Alcaraz remains at No. 3, as does Taylor Fritz at No. 4, while Daniil Medvedev slipped two places to No. 7 after a bad-tempered second-round exit at Melbourne.

Novak Djokovic, who retired with a hamstring injury during the Australian Open semifinals, rose one spot to No. 6, behind Casper Ruud. Tommy Paul is the new face in the men's top 10, reaching a career-best No. 9 after his quarterfinal appearance at Melbourne Park. □